



Childhood Connections

November 4, 2025

NEW

First Licensed Child Care Program To Earn a Quality Designation



Congratulations to the University of Missouri Child Development Lab who is recognized as the first licensed child care program to Demonstrate Quality in the Quality Assurance Report (QAR)!

The QAR is a statewide system recognizing quality in early care and education programs while allowing choice in how quality practices are demonstrated. This child-centered framework focuses on quality teacher-child interactions, program structure, staff/professional standards, inclusive practices, and family engagement. Programs are recognized for their strengths and supported through coaching, training opportunities, and access to quality supports and resources.

This quality recognition is a clear vision for what each child in Missouri should experience in early care and education programs regardless of age or setting.

Grant Updates

Innovation Grants to Support Child Care Program Start-Ups with Business Partnerships

DESE's Innovation Grant to Start-Up a New Child Care Program helps new child care providers launch programs in partnership with local businesses or community organizations to meet the growing need for quality child care across Missouri.

The last day to apply is November 30, 2025.



[Learn more about Innovation Grants here.](#)

Missouri Quality Prekindergarten (MOQPK) Grants



The MOQPK-CC grant is designed to provide funding for high quality preschool in Missouri's child cares.

The MOQPK-HS grant is designed to provide funding for high quality preschool in Missouri's Head Start.

The last day to apply for these two grants November 7, 2025.

[Learn more about MOQPK Grants here.](#)

Conferences

Conference on the Young Years 2026



Get ready to Ignite Curiosity & Inspire Possibility at the annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY)! CYY will be held on March 5-7, 2026, at the Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, MO. Vendors and exhibitors may apply for booth spaces at CYY, and sponsorship opportunities are now available.

We have a great lineup of keynote speakers, along with many breakout session presenters. [Learn more about the conference here.](#)

Make plans to join us for the 2026 conference.

Subsidy Updates

Child Care Subsidy Income Guidelines

Income eligibility for the child care subsidy program is based on several pieces of information, including the federal poverty level (FPL). This federal data is updated annually, which can result in changes to eligibility income limits for the child care subsidy program.

- FPL used for eligibility determinations has slightly increased the income limits based on family size. As a result, some families who were previously ineligible may now qualify.



- The system will use the new income guidelines to determine eligibility for any new or renewal application submitted on or after November 1, 2025.
- The system will use the old guidelines for any change during an existing eligibility period.

Learn more in the updated November 2025 income guidelines and sliding fees chart or on the [Subsidy Rates and Sliding Fees webpage](#).

Subsidy Changes Webinar



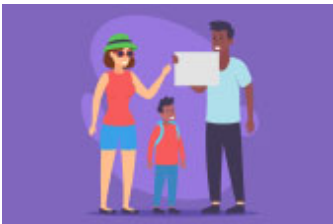
The Child Care Subsidy Program will be hosting a [webinar about Pay in Advance and Pay on Authorized Enrollment](#) on Monday, November 10, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Team members will share an overview of the new payment practices, where we are in the process today with the Child Care Data System (CCDS) development, changes to rules, and what to expect for future training and announcements.

Website Updates for Pay in Advance and Pay on Authorized Enrollment



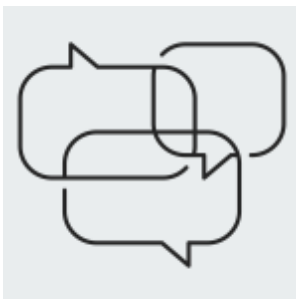
For all the latest information about the work to carry out child care subsidy payments in advance of services and based on authorized enrollment instead of attendance, please visit our [new webpage here!](#)

Family Eligibility Information Flyers



To help families navigate the child care subsidy application, DESE Office of Childhood has created several new handouts like the “[Application Reminder Checklist](#)” and the “[Job Search Flyer](#)” that can be found on our [website](#).

We Want To Know



Share your stories with the Office of Childhood!

Submit news and updates about Missouri Early Care and Education!

Or email OOCOutreach@dese.mo.gov.

Miss Something?

Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other basis prohibited by statute in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 7th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-522-1775 or TTY 800-735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.

DESE Office of Childhood | 205 Jefferson Street - 1st Floor | Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Report Spam](#)